

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 402

By Crowe

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Robert D. LaPella of Johnson City.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Robert D. LaPella; and

WHEREAS, Robert LaPella was an exemplary public servant and consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, a native of Indianola, Iowa, Mr. LaPella was the son of George and Eathel LaPella; he embraced his passion and love of music and singing at a young age; and

WHEREAS, he began his lifelong pursuit of music education at Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa; following a stint in the United States Air Force, he returned to Drake University and completed his bachelor's and master's degrees in music; and

WHEREAS, Robert LaPella was a faculty member at Bethany College in West Virginia while he completed graduate studies at Indiana University; he then taught at the College of Emporia in Kansas; and

WHEREAS, in 1962, Mr. LaPella joined the music department at East Tennessee State University (ETSU); as an associate professor, he mentored innumerable students in the art of singing and served as chairman of the Voice Department and director of the Opera Workshop; and

WHEREAS, during his years at ETSU, he served as a member and national officer of the National Association of Teachers of Singing and became a member of the ETSU Foundation; he and his wife, Jane, founded the Johnson City Civic Chorale. He retired as Professor Emeritus in 1997; and

WHEREAS, an avid hiker and horseman, Robert LaPella was a world traveler, opera lover, and creative builder of a harpsichord, playhouses, stage sets, scout projects, and, most treasured, the family log cabin; he enjoyed the ETSU Faculty Square Dance Club and for nine years in his retirement served as a loyal volunteer mail carrier at Johnson City Medical Center; and

WHEREAS, Mr. LaPella was an active and devout member of Munsey Memorial United Methodist Church, which he served faithfully for many years as a singer in the Chancel Choir, participant in the Philosophers' Sunday School class, and member of the administrative board; and

WHEREAS, Robert LaPella was also deeply devoted to his family, and he always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, he enjoyed the loving companionship of his wife of sixty-two years, Jane McNeil LaPella, and was the proud father of Claire (David) Reagan, Chris (Larry) Collins, and Alex (Lisa) LaPella and the treasured grandfather of Emily (Brandon) Reagan Pritchard, Whitney (Shawn) Reagan Kelley, Joel Reagan, Ryan (Brittany) Collins, Evan Collins, Sean (Grace) Collins, Alden Collins, Freeman LaPella, and Calder LaPella; he doted on his great-grandchildren, Riley Pritchard, Kate Pritchard, and Hannah Kelley; and

WHEREAS, Mr. LaPella is lovingly remembered by his brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law, Burns and Ida McNeil, Carolyn Bartenhagen, and Kay and Ron Gates, and numerous nieces and nephews; and

WHEREAS, Robert LaPella leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Robert D. LaPella, reflecting fondly upon his

impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Mr. LaPella.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.